

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 15 February 2012
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Aline Booth (Alt.), Joan Buck (Alt.), Neil Facchinetti (from 8:35p), Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander. *Members absent:* Peter Drzewiecki, Robert Dahn, Frank Trainor. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:32p by Chair Quentin Kessel. Aline Booth and Joan Buck were designated voting members for this meeting.

2. The draft **minutes** of **the 18 January meeting** were approved with the correction of a typo.

3. IWA Referral: W1492 (Healey, 476 Storrs Rd.) {Lehmann's report on the 02/14 IWA Field Trip to this site is attached.} The applicant proposes to renovate an old barn in Mansfield Center for a banquet and wedding facility. From the barn, land slopes gently down to a large pond. The leaching field for the facility's septic system would be below the barn and about 100 ft from the pond at its closest point. Beds of plantings are planned for the area between the leaching field and the fence at the Town's right-of-way along the pond's edge. Walkways around the barn would have a pervious brick surface; roof drainage would be directed into dry wells at the north edge of the property. A culvert in the drainage swale from Storrs Rd to the pond along the south edge of the property would direct runoff from Storrs Rd and the adjacent Mansfield's Restaurant parking area toward the pond; sections of perforated pipe would allow some of it to seep into the ground along the way, and several catchments would impede movement of sand and sediment into the pond.

After some discussion, focusing on the potential for damage to the pond from nutrient loading and sedimentation, the Commission agreed (**motion:** Booth, Buck; all in favor save Facchinetti, who had not yet arrived) to comment to the IWA that:

Because of the sensitive nature of the pond (classified as a bog) behind and below the barn, this development will have a negative impact on wetlands unless proper precautions are taken. Bogs like this one are very sensitive to nutrient loading, and the coarse soils in this area facilitate movement of ground water. Nutrients from septic leachate and fertilizer will compromise the bog if they reach it; sedimentation can also be a problem. For more information, the IWA should consult testimony in the public record on The Farms, a development proposed (c.1989) for this area but not approved by PZC, and DEP's *Water Quality Guidelines* (c. 2005). It may be possible to prevent damage to the bog by properly engineering drainage: location & design of the leaching field, rain gardens, catchments for sand and sediments, perforated culvert, etc.

4. Dark Skies. Kessel reported that the screening of "The City Dark," a documentary film on light pollution, at E. O. Smith Auditorium on 13 February had attracted a large (100-150) audience. The film was introduced by Mansfield resident and amateur astronomer William Shakalis; afterward, Leo Smith from the International Dark-Sky Association and Richard Stevens from the UConn Health Center answered questions from the audience. Mr. Shakalis organized and promoted the event and deserves most of the credit for its success; also to be thanked are Matt Hart, who enabled purchase of the DVD, and Jennifer Kaufman, who made the

arrangements with E. O. Smith.

The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Kessel, Booth) that light pollution is a problem that should be acknowledged in the next edition of the Plan of Conservation and Development and addressed in part through lighting regulations based on the *Model Lighting Ordinance* proposed by the Illuminating Engineering Society and International Dark-Sky Association.

5. UConn Water Source Study. Meitzler reported that test wells are now being drilled in some of UConn's water supply study areas – the lower Willimantic River area just south of Eagleville and the area off Bassetts Bridge road. Kessel attended a presentation on expanding the study to include moving Well A in the Fenton River well-field farther from the river, in the thought that more water might be extracted from the relocated well without drawing down the river itself. He pointed out that the proposed location is near the University's pistol range, where lead contamination of the soil may be a problem.

6. Hazardous Waste Transfer Station. In response to a query from Booth, Kessel reported on the current status of plans to move UConn's Hazardous Waste Transfer Station from its present location behind Horsebarn Hill to a site that is not in a public water supply watershed. At one time it was to be relocated near the University's sewage treatment plant, but that site is no longer available. UConn now appears to be thinking of putting it in the new Tech Park.

7. Adjourned at 8:50p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 16 February 2012; approved 21 March 2012.

Attachment: 02/14/12 IWA Field Trip Report

W1492 (Healey, 476 Storrs Rd.) The applicant proposes to renovate an old barn off Storrs Rd in Mansfield Center so that it can be used for weddings and other events. The land slopes gently from the barn down to a pond. Standard erosion controls should suffice to protect the pond during construction. Walkways around the barn are to be paved in pervious brick, with plantings and other landscaping between them and the Town's fenced right-of-way along the pond. Rainwater from the roof will be directed into drywells. A drainage swale runs along the south edge of the property to the pond from Storrs Rd. The applicant proposes to improve its appearance and performance by directing runoff (most of it from the adjacent parking lot of Mansfield's Restaurant) into a buried culvert with catchments to trap sand.

Scott Lehmann